# The Cleveland Museum of Art

## Cleveland Museum of Art to Transfer Roman Sculpture of Drusus Minor to the Republic of Italy

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Kelley Notaro Schreiber

The Cleveland Museum of Art
knotaro@clevelandart.org
216-707-6898

**CLEVELAND (April 18, 2017)** –The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) today announced that it will transfer an early 1st century A.D. marble portrait head of Drusus Minor (Drusus Julius Caesar,13 B.C.-A.D. 23) to the Republic of Italy. At his death at the age of 37, Drusus Minor, the son of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, was next in line to the imperial throne. The sensitivity of the carving, the excellent state of preservation, and the monumental scale distinguish it as among the most accomplished portraits of the Julio-Claudian prince to have survived from antiquity.

The sculpture, previously sold at a public auction (Drouot) in Paris in 2004, was acquired by CMA in 2012 from a dealer, following extensive research to confirm its history. The research at that time indicated that the sculpture originally came from North Africa.

After the sculpture was acquired, a companion head came on the market. An article had been written about the second head in 2005, and many years later, an Italian scholar maintained that the second head was illicitly removed during the World War II. Following the discovery of this scholarship, the museum investigated the possibility that the sculpture might have a similar history. Subsequently, the museum contacted the Ministry of Culture and, working with the Ministry and the Carabinieri, was able to confirm that the Drusus was excavated in Italy before 1926 at Sessa Aurunca, and was illegally removed from a small museum during the later stages of World War II. After this extensive research in Italy, the museum determined that the transfer of the sculpture was appropriate.

In 2008, the Cleveland Museum of Art entered into a cultural cooperation agreement with the Ministry that formed the basis for a new relationship between CMA and the Republic of Italy. That agreement also provided a framework for the museum to approach the Ministry and obtain the information necessary to allow the museum to decide to transfer the sculpture.

“We have had an excellent relationship with the Ministry for many years,” said William Griswold, CMA director. “When we became aware of facts that were inconsistent with our understanding of the

provenance of the sculpture, contacting the Ministry directly was an easy decision in light of our many years of working with our Italian colleagues. We worked collaboratively with the Ministry first to determine the circumstances of the work's removal and then to finalize the decision to transfer the work."

"This return is the result of an important and fruitful cultural agreement and the full cooperation of CMA with the Italian authorities," said the Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and of Tourism, Dario Franceschini. "Now we await the return of the work, which, once in Italy will be returned as soon as possible in Naples and its communities, from where it was removed."

CMA and the Ministry are finalizing the details of the transfer of the Drusus Minor portrait marble to the Republic of Italy.

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**About the Cleveland Museum of Art**

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [1].

Press Announcements [2]

**Source URL:** https://www.clevelandart.org/about/press/media-kit/cleveland-museum-art-transfer-roman-sculpture-drusus-minor-republic-italy

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[1] https://www.clevelandart.org

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